

STB News

August 2003

Many Weeks of Effort Went into Aug. 20-21 LDRD Review

Many weeks of careful thought and detailed work went into preparing for the Aug. 20 and 21 Annual Program Review of the Laboratory Directed Research and Development (LDRD) program at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

The meeting drew highly placed officials from the Department of Energy (DOE), the University of California (UC), and LANL to the Los Alamos Research Park Conference Center for a series of summary talks and specific presentations representative of the work produced in Los Alamos with LDRD funding.

Among those who attended were Gerald E. Green, director of the DOE Office of Institutional and Joint Planning; Cory Coll of the UC President's Office; Bill Press, LANL's deputy director for science and technology; Allen Hartford, leader of Science and Technology Base Programs (STB); and David Watkins, LDRD team leader.

In opening remarks at the meeting, Press said that LDRD is "absolutely essential" to the Laboratory's path forward. He said that the program has very strong support from Laboratory Director Pete Nanos, a retired three-star admiral who has a doctorate in physics from Princeton and a "deep, abiding interest in the whole scientific endeavor."

Press noted that the Laboratory's new vision statement says that LANL will be "the trusted, competitive, scientific solution for today's and tomorrow's national security challenges." LDRD, he said, is essential to the "tomorrow" part of the statement.

Press also noted the importance of LDRD to the third point in the Laboratory's new mission statement, which says LANL will "solve national problems in defense, energy, environment, and infrastructure."

Green said LDRD is part of the Laboratory's "competitive edge." "I'm delighted to be here," he said. "We know it's a great program."



LDRD Team Leader David Watkins, right, chats with Bill Press, Laboratory deputy director for science and technology, as the LDRD review begins. For more photos, see page 4.

Watkins explained that LDRD sustains the vitality of the Laboratory for its long-term missions, promoting solid scientific effort, developing established scientists, and bringing in bright new people for the Laboratory.

In compliance with congressional mandate, LDRD receives 6% of the Laboratory's budget, but Watkins said that fiscal year 2002 data indicated that LDRD-funded work produced about 25 percent of the Laboratory's refereed publications in archival journals; led to about 33 percent of LANL's 2002 patents; and contributed to the technology described in all eight of the successful 2003 R&D 100 applications.

Watkins noted that great advances in science are not predictable.

"Twenty years ago, superconductivity was only a gleam in the eye of a few physicists. Ten years ago, the human genome project was just

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Foreign Travel Handles Some 1500 Trip Requests Per Year

Laboratory employees who never go on foreign travel probably don't realize just how complex the process is—but Debbie Martinez and her staff in the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Foreign Travel Office are well aware of just what it takes.

Her office processes approximately 1,500 trips per year. In a recent interview, Martinez said, "We have more people going on foreign travel than any other laboratory."

The most frequent destinations for LANL travelers are, in descending order: the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Germany, Canada, Japan, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, Korea, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, and Spain.

Martinez has five employees—Josefina Salazar, Lisa Carlson, Marcella Cromeenes, Caroline Trujillo, and Daniel Duran (an undergraduate student).

Carlson and Trujillo have the responsibility of making sure that all Laboratory travel complies with the regulations of the Department of Energy, the National Nuclear Security Administration, LANL, and all other relevant organizations.

Martinez noted that her office works with employees of the Chief Financial Officer Division and the Supply Chain Management Division (people in the former Business Operations Division) on reimbursement and reservation issues; with the Health, Safety, and Radiation Protection Division on immunizations and health (such issues as the recent SARS outbreak); and with Internal Security (ISEC), which prebriefs many people who travel for the Laboratory.

"Each sponsor back at (DOE) Headquarters has its own requirements as well," she said, opening one of the shelves in her office to reveal a four-foot-long collection of regulation notebooks from organizations including the Office of Science.

By presidential directive, she added, anyone going on foreign travel must have a "foreign travel cable." The paperwork for this document starts with the Laboratory; goes through the DOE and the Department of State to the appropriate embassy; and then returns to State, the DOE, and the Lab. Salazar is assigned to handle this complex requirement.

Once a traveler returns to the Laboratory, he or she must file a report within 30 days. Cromeenes is assigned to see that this report is completed on

time. Once a report is received, she does a quality check, then provides copies to the travel sponsor and to the appropriate people in the Laboratory, and closes out the trip on the Laboratory and DOE systems.

Duran "helps whenever we are backlogged," Martinez said, describing him as a true "asset to the organization."

STB-Foreign Travel has a good group of people, Martinez said. She noted that sometimes it can be hard to get a team to work well together, especially when the work is difficult, but, she said, the people in her group are "quick to help each other when one is backlogged." They have a "positive outlook," and they are "extremely customer-focused." They are "very professional in their interactions," she said, "even during the most difficult times." That fact, she said, "makes it nice to come to work."

Foreign Travel employees build their relationships by having breakfast burritos together on Fridays, and occasional "Frito pie days" at lunch. "We get to experience each other's cooking," Martinez said, and it's "very good."

Martinez noted that Trujillo recently had a baby. Her little girl, Natalia, was born July 18 and weighed 6 pounds and 6 ounces.



Lisa Harris in her new office in Canyon.

Lisa Harris Joins LDRD Staff

The Laboratory Directed Research and Development (LDRD) office has a new staff member. Lisa Harris joined the organization on Aug. 4. She filled the position previously held by Rita Spencer, who retired recently.

Harris was born in Santa Fe and grew up in northern New Mexico. She and her family lived on the Navajo Reservation for four years. Her parents, Morris and Sharron Crane, both teachers, later owned a lumberyard in La Cueva

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Notes from Allen

We have scheduled two important division meetings the second week of September.

Employees who work in Canyon will meet on Monday, Sept. 8, 11 a.m. to noon, in Room 160 at Canyon. Employees who work at the Research Library will meet on Wednesday, Sept. 10, 8 a.m. until 9 a.m., in the Cochiti Room at Oppenheimer Study Center.

During these meetings, I will be briefing employees on the recent division leaders' strategic planning retreat, which I attended. I will report on plans for the future. Please plan to be there.

Allen Hartford

Harris (Cont'd from p.2.)

and built a number of homes in the Jemez Mountains.

Harris graduated from Los Alamos High School in 1988. She subsequently earned a bachelor of arts degree in communication and women's history from the University of New Mexico (UNM); a master's degree from UNM in training and learning technologies; and a bachelor of science in computer science from the College of Santa Fe.

She has worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory for about 15 years. She was a high school co-op student and an undergraduate student employee in Theoretical Division and the Center for Nonlinear Studies for about five years, from 1987 to 1993; she worked as a graduate student and then as a staff member and a web instructor in Information Management 2 (Enterprise Support and Computer Education) from 1994 to 2001; and she worked in the Nuclear Materials Technology Division from 2001 until she moved to the Science and Technology Base Programs LDRD office in August.

Asked what attracted her to the LDRD position, she said it was "the challenges and the interactions I'll have throughout the whole Lab. I had been doing so much programming over at NMT that it was exciting to go back to a people-oriented position."

She sees her primary responsibility in the new job as supporting David Watkins, leader of the LDRD organization. One of the first projects in which she was involved was the Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration Annual Program Review of LDRD, held Aug. 20 and 21. (Please see the story on Page 1.) She commented, "The caliber of science we do at this Laboratory is just so fascinating."

Harris is married to Mark Harris of the Project Management Division. He is project leader of mechanical and electrical services for the new National Security Sciences Building. They have four

children: Melissa, a student at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Wash.; Bryan, who is in the Navy, stationed in Oceana, Va.; Austin, who will be in the fourth grade this fall at Piñon Elementary School in White Rock; and Cassidy, who will be in the second grade at Piñon this fall.

LDRD Review (Cont'd from p.1.)

getting started. Five years ago, the concept of 'applied nanotechnology' was not well defined," he said. The LDRD program—like the National Science Foundation—provides a means for scientists to pursue research driven by curiosity instead of focusing solely on established science with predefined milestones and applications. In many cases, the LDRD approach has proven successful in producing the most creative—and productive—of breakthroughs.

Watkins then opened the floor to first-day presenters. The first group of three reported on research relevant to homeland security. Those who spoke were James Theiler, William Priedhorsky, and James Tencate. After a break, four presenters—Anna Hayes-Sterbenz, Irene Beyerlein, and the team of Michael S. Murillo and postdoctoral employee Dirk O. Gericke—described research related to nuclear weapons.

On the second day of the review, William J. Feiereisen gave an "Overview of Simulation at LANL"; Mark Taylor and Kevin Sanbonmatsu discussed how their work related to the transition to the RAVE Facility; and Michael Warren and Christopher Fryer discussed "Three Dimensional Effects in Core-Collapse Supernovae."

Staff preparation for the meeting included arrangements for a luncheon and a breakfast; creation of attractive briefing books providing copies of most presenters' viewgraphs for all attendees; production of coordinated nametags and tent cards; and even provision of fresh flowers.

Watkins thanked his employees for their efforts. Just as it "takes a village" to raise a child successfully, he said, it takes the entire group to put on a truly successful review session.

The program impressed Green. He later sent an e-mail message to Nanos, Press, and Hartford in which he said, in part, "...I want to express my strongest praise for the performance of Dr. David Watkins during this year's LANL LDRD program review. We have come to expect outstanding performance from David in all aspects of the LDRD program...." Green added, "David has assumed a leadership role in dealing with the many disparate groups who are looking at the LDRD program.... Without his leadership and active participation in the NNSA (National Nuclear Security Administration) LDRD Working Group, our task of defending the program would be much more difficult...."

LDRD Review Draws DOE, UC, and LANL Participation



In the photo above, people begin arriving on the opening day of the LDRD review, Aug. 20. Gerald Green of the DOE is at left. Cory Coll of the UC President's Office is at right. In the photo at left, Green, Laboratory Deputy Director Bill Press, and STB Leader Allen Hartford (left to right) talk business while dishing up lunch. In the photo below, LDRD Team Leader David Watkins, right, talks with Coll.



The photos and text in this newsletter are provided by Charmian Schaller of IM-1. If you have story ideas, please call her at 665-3895 or drop by Room 123 in Canyon School.